



A study of certain variables (Impact Exposure & Self-esteem) on Adolescent girls (11-16yrs)of Sarvam Shakti Foundation

ABSTRACT

An Independent study conducted by the volunteers of The Shri Ram college in order to study the self-esteem of the beneficiaries of Sarvam Shakti Project in relation to the exposure given to them through the training of classical dance form.



Prime Investigators: Himani Yadav
(Student The Shri Ram College of Commerce)

Supervisor: Neetu Sethi and Nehha Bhatnagar (Sarvam Foundation-registered non-Profit Organisation)

A study of certain variables (Impact exposure and self-esteem) on Adolescent girls (11-16 years) of Sarvam Shakti Foundation.

Himani Yadav, Neetu Sethi and Nehha Bhatnagar

Sarvam Foundation (Non-profit organization), New Delhi, 110070

Keywords: Impact exposure, Self-esteem and Intervention

Abstract: A comparative study was conducted in order to investigate certain variables (impact exposure and self-esteem) of the beneficiaries of Sarvam Shakti Project and Non- Sarvam children. The sample consist 30 adolescent girls in the age group of 11-16years. The Sample were further classified under 2 groups- Experimental (n=15, Sarvam Shakti girls, undergoing Indian Classical Dance training for the past 1.5 years) and Controlled group (n=15). It further aimed to highlight health benefits of learning Indian classical dance form on the overall personality of the adolescent girls. Tools used for data collection were **Self Esteem Scale** (Rosenberg, M., 1965) and Qualitative Interviews. Results revealed that the average score of Experimental Group (19.73) and Controlled Group (16.33) differ significantly. Qualitative analysis shows that Shakti's Intervention through dance training not only leads to higher self-esteem but also contribute in their overall personality development be it academic, health, confidence, public speaking, of adolescent girls.

INTRODUCTION:

Being physically active for children is indicative of health benefits which include healthy growth and development of the body and prevention of obesity, all of which might be conducive to health in adulthood. Studies suggest that exercise and sports improve children's body image and self-esteem (Fox, 2000; Gruber, 1986). Exercise may also reduce stress, exercise, and depression (Calfas & Taylor, 1994).

According to the World Health Organisation (2009), "physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor contributing to global mortality." Physical inactivity is an imperative public health issue in which dance might provide a significant alleviation.

Dance is one of the most crucial art forms which involves expressing oneself through the use of body movements and expressions. Dance has not only evolved as an art form in the 21st century but also as a therapy/medicine providing relief to people around the world to their psychological and physical problems. Research has found that regular engagement in dance can have many benefits such as decreasing anxiety, lowering risk of dementia, improving mood and increasing confidence. (Schnitt & Schnitt (1988); New England Journal of Medicine 2003; 348:2508-16). Expression of feelings in a healthy fashion, increased critical and creative thinking abilities are certain other psychological benefits of dance. (Bannister, 2003; Buckroyd, 2001; Hanna, 1999; Minton 2003; Keun & Hunt 2006).



Dance and movement therapy have impacted adolescents considerably. Research suggests that dance and movement classes in academic settings may serve as a therapeutic tool to help young people with social interventions and personal development (Goodgame, 2007; Ross, 2000). In the current research impact of dance on the self-esteem of adolescent dancers has been assessed.

IMPACT OF DANCE ON SELF-ESTEEM:

Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as an individual overall positive evaluation to the self. Self-esteem and body image have a positive correlation: positive body image creates higher self-esteem whereas a negative body image creates lower self-esteem (Dorak, 2011; Vesile & Mustafa, 2010). Researches assessing the link between dance and self-esteem have yielded mixed results. (Minton 2000; Vicario et al., 2001; Murcua et al., 2010; Minton 2000; Beetle et al., 2001; Marchant- Haycox and Wilson, 1992) Minton (2000) sought to find a link between self-esteem and participating in dance classes by assessing 24 studies related to dance and self-esteem including dance forms such as: creative, ethnic, aerobic, and ballroom. She found that creative dance had the most significant impact on self-esteem. Additionally, she found that creative dance increased self-concept, confidence, and a sense of acceptance and belonging amongst peers.

SHAKTI AN UNIQUE INITIATIVE BY SARVAM FOUNDATION:

Founded by Nehha Bhatnagar in 2012, Sarvam Foundation is a unique arts trust that promotes performing arts in fresh and innovative ways. Sarvam tries to bring audiences from different backgrounds to watch and appreciate India's rich performing arts culture. *Shakti* is a unique grassroots project in India that makes underprivileged girls develop life skills through ancient performing arts. Each girl learns one form of classical dance or music professionally as well as yoga asanas, Sanskrit shlokas, martial dance forms and various folk dances from around the world. The Arts, especially Classical Arts are scientifically healing. This aids their physical well-being. Complicated rhythmic patterns sharpen their brains and focus. This aids their mental health. Discipline, teamwork, crisis management, taking on responsibility and maintaining hygiene are skills they imbibe for life.

METHOD AND MATERIAL:

Participants were separated into groups through convenient sampling. The sample consisted of two groups of participants, belonging to the urban slums of Delhi (Kishan Garh, Vasant Kunj), and currently enrolled in school. All the participants of the study belonged to the low socio-economic strata of the society. The occupation of the sample included only student respondents. The Experimental Group (N=15) consisted of participants who were enrolled in Sarvam Foundation's Shakti Dance program for more than 1.5 years and were engaged in Indian Classical Dance forms such as Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Kuchipudi. The control group (N=15) consisted of participants who were not enrolled in the program and were not learning any dance form. Although the group was matched on certain variables- age, Socio economic status and educational qualification. The mean age of experimental group was 14.8 years and the mean age of control group was 13.73 years.

Self Esteem Scale: (Rosenberg, M., 1965). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem. This scale has 10 items. The reliability of the scale is as follows: Internal consistency for the RSE range from



0.77 to 0.88. Test-retest reliability for the RSE range from 0.82 to 0.85. The validity of the scale is as follows: Criterion validity for RSE = 0.55, Construct validity for RSE = correlated with anxiety (- 0.64), depression (- 0.54), and anomie (- 0.43).

Qualitative Interviews: Structured interview technique was carried out. 25% of the Experimental group sample was selected using chit method for qualitative analysis and were interviewed. It was held to know about their views of the SARVAM SHAKTI intervention and assessing the impact of dance training on their overall personality development.

Procedure:

The experimental group (n=15) were first administered on the above-mentioned self-esteem test. A rapport was formed with them, after which they were seated, and a consent was signed. The tests were administered, and data was collected for analysis.

The control group (n=15) consisted of girls belonging to the low socio-economic strata, studying in a government school of Neighbouring community. A rapport was established with the girls and consent was taken before administration. The tests were administered, and data was collected for analysis.

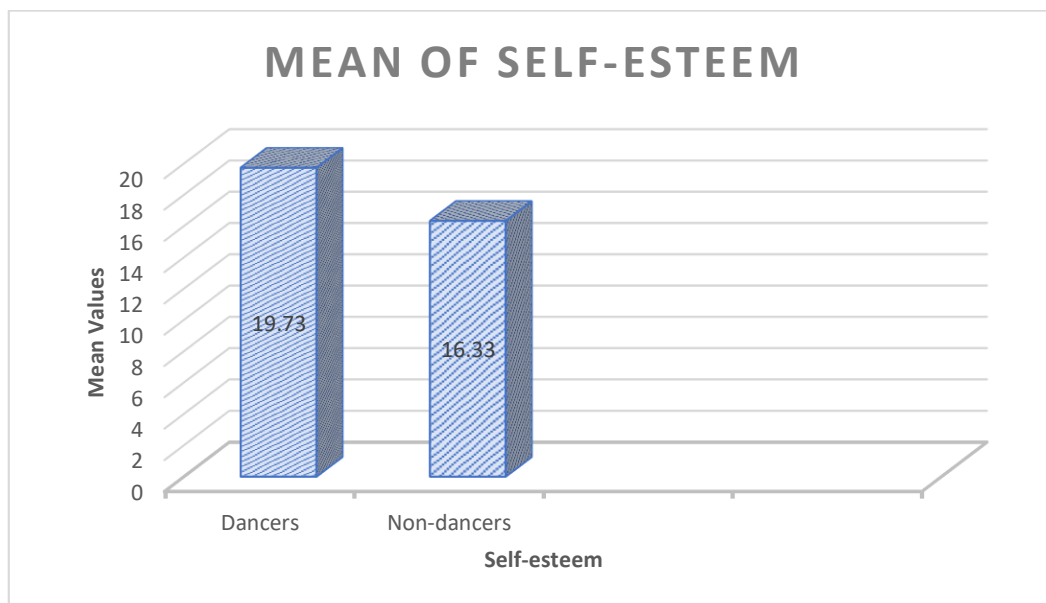
RESULT & DICUSSION:

The data on Self-esteem scale revealed that the Experimental group scored higher than the controlled group indicating higher Self-esteem.

Fig. No. Average scores of two groups on self-esteem scale

Self-Esteem	Experimental Group	Control group
Mean/Average Score	19.73	16.33

Table 1 explains the difference of the means on self-esteem of adolescent dancers and non-dancers.



Self-esteem, also referred to as self-worth and self-respect, is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. In other words, how much a person appreciates and likes



him/herself. Thus, the results indicate that females who are dancers and are intervened by Sarvam Foundation, have a higher self-esteem as compared to females who are not being a part of any intervention programme. In an attempt to further analysing the SEScores in relation to the qualitative data it was found that High self-esteem and intervention programme helped adolescent girls in public speaking, leadership skills, voicing out and criticising skills, improved task performance and also lead to greater happiness.

According to ‘Body Image and Self Esteem in Adolescent Ballet Dancers’ conducted by Norman Bettel and Oliver Bettel, 13- to 17-yr.-old female dancers valued their personality as less beautiful, pleasant, attractive, confident, loveable, and good than the non-dancing girls did and were more preoccupied with weight. Comparison between our study and Bettel’s study shows us that dancers in India aren’t as preoccupied with their weight as the ballet dancers in other countries. According to The Guardian, a ballet dancer’s approach to weight is a tragedy, which is due to the demands created by society relating to a particular weight. The Guardian states that due to a strict diet plan and weight demands, ballet dancers become anorexic, sometimes even leading to early deaths. However, such culture does not exist in Indian dance forms. There is a need to maintain a healthy body and lifestyle in order to be flexible, but these dance forms do not demand dancers to be crazy or insecure about their weight.

ASSESSMENT OF INTERVIEWS:

In-depth interviews of four girls were taken and analysed. After analysis they were converted into case studies which are as follows:

CASE 1:

Akanksha, a 14-year-old girl, hails from low socio-economic neighbourhood of Delhi and is a part of the SHAKTI programme of Sarvam Foundation. She is a very disciplined and confident teenager, who loves to dance and showcase her talent to everyone. She was 11 years old when she was first introduced to Sarvam foundation and to dance through her tuition classes (Nayi Disha). She got the opportunity to represent India and Indian classical dance forms in Poland. After this, there was no turning back for her. She found her heart and soul in dancing, especially in Kathak. She claims that her family, particularly her father, is really fond of her and her dancing. They support her in all aspects, be it education or extra-curricular activities. Her father, who is a driver by profession, tells her “focus on your studies and dance, rest everything will fall into place”.

She gains immense respect and appreciation from her school teachers, family and community members. Due to her participation in school programmes and competitions, her teachers and school friends recognise her and take inspiration from her. However, she feels alone around her school friends as she feels that they don’t respect her. But she feels the happiest at the foundation, when she meets all her friends here, who genuinely respect her and address her as “aap”. Her community members also recognise her as the girl who is a dancer and has represented India in Poland. Even though everyone appreciates her for her skills, she still feels that there is not much respect given to Indian dance forms as a whole. People today still prefer Bollywood music and dance over Indian classical. Thus, she wants to create more awareness about this.



Akanksha claims that dance has made her confident and has given her a vision in life. She believes that through dance, her mind and memory has become sharp, which helps her concentrate in her studies as well. Sarvam foundation has taught her about nutrition and diet, yoga, postures, behaviour, and mannerisms. Also, travelling to Poland helped her learn about different cultures, languages and behaviours.

Therefore, Akanksha takes utmost pride in her dancing skills and is the happiest when dancing. She would like to continue her passion and pursue a career in dancing as well. She believes that as Sarvam Foundation helped her to gain an identity and self-worth, she too can help other girls, like her, to gain their own identity.

CASE 2:

Pinky, a 13-year-old beneficiary of Sarvam foundation has been a part of Sarvam since 2017. She is currently in class 9th and learns Kathak. Her father is a gardener and her mother is a housewife. She initially faced wrath from her family members especially her father who thought dance isn't something which members of respected families do. She still struggles to get her family's support but she continues to follow her passion in spite of that. She started liking dance through Television when she saw actresses dancing. Although she is learning dance since class 6th she got associated with Sarvam in class 7th.

Talking about her initial experience at Sarvam she tells how she felt apprehended and thought she will not be able to make friends but once she got settled, she made friends which make her feel safe. She says Sarvam is a space where she gets more support than her home. She says that Sarvam has given her an unique identity at her neighbourhood, village and school. Teachers know her and ask her if she has doubts whenever she misses classes.

She really likes travelling to other countries/states for her dance performances as it gives her a chance to explore other people's culture, learn about their language and allow her to share her culture with them. She wants to be a dancer when she grows up as she thinks this will allow her to make her own identity and be known amongst people. She is filled with pride regarding the things she has learnt at Sarvam.

CASE 3:

Shweta is a 16-year-old girl who joined the Sarvam foundation through Nayi Disha. She found about Sarvam Foundation through a friend who studied with her. She was always inspired by dancers and wanted to try her hand at it. But due to lack of opportunities and society rules, she couldn't. However as soon as she heard about the foundation and the dance exchange programme to Poland, she couldn't say no. Her parents supported her immensely, but the society had a negative opinion about it. Her community members and distant family said that girls shouldn't be allowed to travel so much, and they should better stay at home. In spite of all the negativity, she went to Poland and won many hearts.

Shweta believes that due to Sarvam foundation, she has learnt good mannerisms and behaviour, which her school friends lack. Her school friends tend to be abusive and impulsive with others, whereas she usually stays calm and respects everyone, even people of her age and below. Due to such a good behaviour, her teachers identify her and appreciate her for her behaviour. Her teachers even select her for performances in competitions. However, she also believes that her



teachers don't treat her or other classmates any differently and keeps her dance life and school life separate.

Dancing has not only taught Shweta skills, but has also helped her in learning various other lessons of life. Her concentration and memory have improved, and her body is a lot more flexible. Apart from dance, Sarvam foundation has taught her self-defence, yoga, singing, and how to stay healthy. Thus, when she grows up, no matter what, she would continue her dance and help many others to gain the knowledge and art of dance.

CASE 4:

Lakshmi, a 14-year-old girl and a beneficiary of Sarvam Foundation shared her experience of being a part of Sarvam Foundation. Lakshmi studies in class 8th. She has five sisters and she is the fourth one. She along with her eldest sister who is 18 years old are a part of Sarvam for more than 2 years. Lakshmi is a happy-go-lucky teenager who dreams of accomplishing big things in her life.

Her father is a Tabla player and her mother is a housewife. Due to her father's already established roots in art form she never faced any opposition from her family for learning dance. She got to know about Sarvam Foundation from her sister who was chosen to go to Poland for a performance. Once enrolled in the foundation she began learning Kuchipudi but switched to Bharatanatyam after a few months as she was found to be better suited for that.

She feels that her family is filled with pride because she is amongst the few privileged ones who had the chance to go to a foreign country and showcase her talent. She also feels elated because she has travelled outside as well as within India to showcase her talent. Talking about the friends she has made at Sarvam she says that they understand her better and she feels more comfortable while sharing her problems with them.

Due to her affiliation with Sarvam she is respected more at her school as she stands out from the crowd. The teachers often appreciate her for her talent and ask other students to be like her which boosts her self-esteem immensely. She strongly feels that everyone should either learn any dance form or yoga as it helps a person to remain fit and increases a person's ability at memorising things.

She wishes to do her PhD in Dance and then open a classical dance training school where she along with her sister would teach other children dance forms. She wants to help other people the way she was helped. Girls, like Lakshmi are full of potential all they need is a platform which Sarvam Foundation strives to provide.

CONCLUSION:

In the end it can be concluded that the impact of Sarvam SHAKTI Project is not limited till self-esteem, it has far reaching benefits such as social support to dancers, academic help and learning good manners as illustrated in the case studies. Projects like SHAKTI are needed more than ever in India as it empowers a girl and gives her the confidence which the female gender has been lacking since ages. It not only brings girls out of deprivation but also gives them wings to fly and achieve whatever they wish to.



Something About the Dance

*Barefoot on the floor
 She is taking dance steps
 Not move away step
 Not sorry to disturb steps
 Not walk away in shame steps
 Not hope you can't hear me steps
 But Dance steps.....*

*I was there and I couldn't stop thinking:
 All this time you had it in you
 The rhythms were already there
 Unreachable
 Now: reachable.*

*I was there this moment watching her
 Becoming more of who she is
 Becoming more than she thought she
 Could be.*

*Barefoot on the floor
 She is moving like the air is suddenly her own.
 Not everybody else's air Not I'm sorry that I breathe air
 Not I hope you can't see me air
 But her own air*

*And her body, wordlessly deserving
 To be there,
 To be her own.*



*There is something about the dance,
She said
Something in how it makes me feel
And then
she smiled.*

Duberg, A.2012, Poetry in Paediatrics

